

## The Sun

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## "Let us alone!"

## Secretary Metcalf and the Fleet.

It is just as well perhaps that Secretary METCALF is getting ready to make his appearance on the Pacific Coast. We note on the part of the people a flagging interest in the fleet and on the part of the crews a slowly growing desire to vacate the role of front row figures in a spectacle. As for the officers themselves they have never regarded the flower festivals, &c., with anything but aversion. The Secretary, therefore, will do well to hasten unless he would find the publicated and the temper of the crews diverted of even the pretence of enthusiasm.

There has been little secret from the first as to the real object of the naval parade. Mr. METCALF wants to be a Senator and with the Senators stand. Used in moderation, the junk of the fleet might have promoted his aspirations. It is no small thing to furnish sleepy towns with a sensation. It is a very high indeed to inject into the same towns afterward several thousands of happy-go-lucky sailors with their pockets full of money and a consuming thirst for spending it. The whole California coast has been enriched by this beneficent shower of gold. There, for example, is Santa Barbara, with a population of 8,000 or 10,000, not more than one-fifth of whom derived any profit from the invasion. The others no doubt subscribed for the show and enjoyed it within reason, but the one-fifth took in the sailors in more ways than one and so improved their opportunity. The result can be imagined. The respectable elements of the community had enough of it when the pageant terminated, the frugal one-fifth dropped the subject when disbursement ceased, and the man-of-warman with an empty wallet and a distended head was left to wonder where his divided of either profit or glory came in. It was so at San Diego, at Los Angeles and elsewhere. What it will be by the time the fleet reaches the Golden Gate we can only conjecture. We say nothing of the officers, except to suggest that no part of it ever possessed for them even the charm of novelty.

It will be well, therefore, for the Hon. VICTOR METCALF to hasten his steps if he proposes to reap any advantage from the fleet's presence on and along his shores. Unless he makes haste or all the processes of human nature are diverted in his favor, he will reach San Francisco just in time to meet a lot of sailors thoroughly disenchanted, devoted of all their original ardor, depleted as regards their pockets, and desirous of nothing so much as a good long old fashioned carouse among themselves. They have endured the protracted strain of a novel gaiety and are tired of it. Such funds as remain to them they would like to spend in their own way. Mr. METCALF will find, we fear, that neither they nor the busy citizens of the California metropolis will lend themselves in the proper spirit to further schemes of holiday making.

We may be wide of the mark. The men of the fleet may reach San Francisco as full of enthusiasm as ever, the populace will meet them keyed to the proper pitch, and Mr. METCALF's prospects for the Senate may swim upon a summer sea. Let us hope so if we can.

## The Alleged Degeneration of the Human Race.

A German scientist, Dr. EMIL KÖNIG, has lately undertaken to prove that in highly civilized countries man has abused his constitutional strength and consequently is more susceptible to disease than he was in earlier times. There is obviously something to be said for this avowal, but considered as a whole the facts do not bear it out.

It is unquestionably true that as civilization advances human life becomes more complex, and the pressure upon a man's physical resources tends to become more intense. It is also true that certain forms of disease, such, for example, as cancer and heart weakness, appear to be more prevalent than they were a century ago—we say "appear," because only in a comparatively recent period have the statistics of mortality and its causes been trustworthy and exhaustive. Neither can it be denied that by our sanitary improvements, the multiplication of hospitals and sanatoria, the demonstration of the germ origin of disease, the discovery of antitoxins and specifics and the development of antiseptic surgery we have sensibly checked the natural process of elimination which brings about the survival of the fittest and the extinction of human beings unable to transmit physical vigor to their offspring. Dr. KÖNIG likewise thinks that he discerns marked deterioration in the human stock, owing to what he alleges to be the present swift decay and loss of the teeth.

Much of this may be admitted, but there is preponderant evidence on the other side. If it were a fact that in

highly civilized countries man is degenerating we should undoubtedly observe two things, namely, a diminishing birth rate and a progressive shortening of the average human life. If we take a broad view of the matter we find the contrary to be the case. In France it must be acknowledged the birth rate has declined so notably that the population remains almost stationary from one decade to another. Against this phenomenon must be set the signal reduced death rate, the result being that the ability to outlive the Scriptural three score years and ten, and even to survive for a century, is much more frequently exhibited in France to-day than it was four generations ago. Then, again, Germany, where there is less illiteracy and where culture is more widely diffused than it is in the French Republic, has at once a high birth rate and a low death rate. As for the supposed injurious influence of the decay and loss of teeth on the stomach, it is notorious that the extraordinary development of the art of dentistry in the last half century and the studious care of teeth now inculcated and almost universally practised by highly civilized peoples have brought about an astonishing change. We scarcely ever see now in men and women under age mouths disfigured by the loss or decay of teeth, whereas this was a common sight up to fifty years ago.

The official records of Geneva, which have been kept carefully for a long period, prove that the average duration of human life is materially greater than it was a hundred and fifty or a hundred years ago. Not only the average length of human existence but the retention of physical and intellectual vigor, or what is called the prime of life, tends to be prolonged. The age limit of usefulness has in practice been pushed forward. The fruitful activity of men over sixty and even seventy years of age is a phenomenon far more frequently observed to-day than it was a hundred years ago. NAPOLEON's career was over at forty-six; VON MOLTKE's can scarcely be said to have begun, so far as great achievements were concerned, till he was nearly seventy. What is true of war is true of diplomacy, of law, of medicine, of every field of work in which mental and physical energy are indispensable. When, in a word, we examine impartially all the data, weighing accurately all the evidence pro and con, we seem justified in taking an optimistic view of the effect of civilization on the bodily well being and longevity of man.

As for the increased ability of highly civilized man to withstand the attacks of disease, this will be evident when we recall the devastation wrought in medieval Europe by the plague; as, for example, by the Black Death, which in the middle of the fourteenth century is believed to have destroyed in several countries at least a third of their inhabitants. No such appalling mortality could now be caused by any contagious malarial.

## De Mortuis.

When in the course of an animated wake the deceased sits suddenly upright and proceeds to participate in the ceremonies, instead of eliciting cries of thankfulness and joy from the company he generally succeeds in creating a panic and putting everybody to flight. A certain analogy is more than intimated in the circumstance of Mr. CHARLES W. MOSE, of financial memory, who incontinently has just paid to his insoluble creditors some six hundred thousand dollars.

## The Police Problem in New York.

New York should have the best police force in the world because it needs the best police force in the world. Why this is so Commissioner BINGHAM explains in an article in the *North American Review* for May, which every citizen interested in the welfare and good name of this city should read. New York is divided by the East and Harlem rivers and by the bay; on the East Side there is a congestion of population such as exists nowhere else in the world, while the outlying districts on Long and Staten islands are so sparsely settled that police beats are impracticably long, one of them on Staten Island requiring twenty miles of patrolling. But the problem is not merely topographical and residential. If there are thousands of tenants in one block on the East Side, there are as many thousands in one downtown skyscraper, and these business hives continue to multiply. Furthermore, New York is the most cosmopolitan and polyglot city in the world.

"In London the alien population is not so large as to cut a serious figure in the statistics of crime, while in New York 80 per centum of all malefactors arraigned in the courts are of foreign birth, and the New York police, moreover, are compelled to deal not only with the predatory criminals of all nations, including our own, but with the feuds of the Sicilian mafia, the Neapolitan camorra, the Armenian hunkies, the Chinese tong, and with other intricate quarrels of the scum of the earth."

The police of London, which compared with New York is a compact city for all its size, deal mainly with an English speaking population; yet in London there is one patrolman to 466 inhabitants and in New York one to 547. Here are other comparisons, all to the disadvantage of New York: Washington, one patrolman to 511; St. Louis, the same ratio; Boston, one to 509; Liverpool, one to 449; Dublin, one to 330; Berlin, one to 340; Budapest, one to 320. In the five boroughs of New York there are 3,065 miles of streets and 7,339 men to patrol them, or there would be as many if the following details were not necessary: 300 policemen to the detective bureau, 350 to traffic regulation, 175 to the courts, 32 to municipal departments and offices, 116 to Central Park, 75 to the Health Department, and 18 to boiler inspection. As the average number of men reporting sick daily is 200, and 50 are absent on leave, 4,743 are left for patrol duty, or 70 men to each of 92 precincts. In view of the topographical, residential, business and racial conditions in New York, General BINGHAM thinks that the patrol force should be increased to provide one policeman to every 400 inhabitants.

But augmenting the force would further impair its efficiency, in General BINGHAM's opinion, unless provision were

made for a staff of civilian detectives; for strict regulation of pawnbrokers (including daily returns of transactions) and of the sale of offensive weapons; and most important of all, for a ten year term for the Commissioner and his removal by Governor or Mayor only on publication of the reasons for dismissal, and not, as now, at the will of either. Why a civilian branch of the detective bureau? Commissioner BINGHAM replies that as the bureau is now constituted "all the members of the police force are well known, and can be easily known to criminals of all kinds, as well as to the crooked politicians who are at the bottom of the present lack of efficiency in the Police Department." He proposes that the fund to maintain a staff of civilian detectives be at the absolute disposal of the Commissioner, subject to audit by the Mayor, the Comptroller and the President of the Civil Service Commission. Thus the head of the Department would be able to employ men who were something more than "rule of thumb" detectives.

Opinions may differ concerning the question of a ten year term for the Police Commissioner, and a civilian detective staff, clandestine in its methods, but the force will never be reformed if public sentiment does not vigorously support a Commissioner who is working and fighting devotedly to give New York a capable police administration. As General BINGHAM says:

"In the last analysis it comes to this: that the police are just as good or just as bad as the citizens make them, and if the better element of citizenship refuses to concern itself about the guardianship of law and order it has no right to complain when the crooked element does."

New York in our time has not had a Commissioner as militant and indomitable for reform as General BINGHAM. The police crook, the political crook and the professional crook are in league against him, desperately bent upon his destruction. If he suffers defeat in his tremendous battle for an adequate police force it will be because the citizens of New York refuse or neglect to hold up his hands. Do they deserve such a fearless champion as THEODORE A. BINGHAM? The question is not to be answered by saying that he has defects of temperament and is not on all occasions the wisest of men.

## A Literary Scandal.

A scandal of formidable magnitude, one not unlike the Carlyle-Froude affair, is stirring literary Germany in an unusual degree. Earlier in the year a book was published at Jena entitled "Franz Overbeck und Friedrich Nietzsche," by CARL ALBRECHT BERNOUILLI. In it at great length and with clearness was described the friendship of OVERBECK—a well known church historian and culture novelist, born at St. Petersburg of German and English parents—and NIETZSCHE during their Basel period. Interesting for the student is the story of his relations with RICHARD WAGNER and that mighty scholar JACOB BURCKHARDT, the historian of the Renaissance. As a mere youth NIETZSCHE had won the praise of both RIETZSCHE and BURCKHARDT for his essay on THEONIS. This was before 1880, in which year at the age of 28 he took his doctor's degree and accepted the chair of classical philology at Basel. His friend OVERBECK noted his dangerously rapid intellectual development and does not fail to record, what has never been acknowledged by the dyed in the wool Nietzscheans, that the "Master" had read and inwardly digested MAX STRINER's anarchistic work "The God and His Own." Not only this long denied fact set forth, but OVERBECK in a careful analysis reaches the positive conclusion that notwithstanding his profound erudition, his richly endowed nature, FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE was not one of the world's great men; that in his mad endeavor to carve himself into the semblance of his own Superman he wrecked brain and body.

The sad irony of this book lies in the fact that the sister of NIETZSCHE, Frau FÖRSTER-NIETZSCHE, who nursed the poet-philosopher from the time of his breakdown in 1888 till his death in 1900; who for twenty years has by pen and personally made such a successful propaganda for his ideas, is in at least three letters—for the first time published by BERNOUILLI—insulted grievously by her brother. This posthumous hatred as expressed in the acrid prose of NIETZSCHE is terribly disconcerting. He calls her a meddlesome woman without a particle of understanding of his ideals. He declares that she has martyred him, has made him ridiculous, and in the last letter he wrote her, dated December, 1896, he wonders at the enigma that has made two persons of such widely different temperaments blood relatives. BERNOUILLI, the editor of these Overbeck letters, adds insult to injury by calling the unselfish, noble minded sister and biographer of her brother a tyrannical and not very intellectual person, who often wounded her brother with her advice and criticism.

At this the storm broke. Mme. FÖRSTER-NIETZSCHE lives at upper Weimar, where is erected the Nietzsche archive, from which yearly an ever rising flood of documents is poured forth. Through her literary lieutenant, PETER GAST—whose real name is HEINRICH KÖSELITZ—she went to law to enjoin the publisher, ECKHARD DIEDERICHSEN of Jena, from printing the second volume of the Overbeck work. PETER GAST doubts the authenticity of these letters, for as he truthfully points out, the love of NIETZSCHE for his sister, as evidenced by an ample correspondence, was great. We recall the touching exclamation of the sick philosopher when once at his sister's house in Weimar he saw her weeping: "Don't cry, little sister, we are all so happy now." That "now" had a sinister significance, for the brilliant thinker was quite helpless and incapable of reading through the pages of a book, though he was never the lunatic pictured by some of his opponents. A deep melancholy had settled upon his soul and he died without the light of a returned reason. It has not occurred to German critics that these letters even if genuine are the product of a diseased imagination. NIETZSCHE was a very suspicious man after his break with WAGNER. He suf-

fered from the mania of persecution. He hated mankind and fled to the heights of Sils-Maria to escape, what FOR so aptly described as the "tyranny of the human race."

As is known, in certain forms of mental delusion the patient turns against those he once loved best. Perhaps this may explain the disagreeable letters which should never have seen the light of day. Legally or no, the sister of the dead man has a moral right to demand that such painful matter shall be excluded from publication. Her fight during two decades for her brother has won her universal admiration. Nevertheless the whole episode is ugly and has brought to the public knowledge of unsuspecting heart burnings and personal bickerings. The literary life, too, can be "strenuous."

## A Modern Proclamation.

Governor C. N. HASKELL of Oklahoma breaks from the conventional proclamation style and addresses his people in small capitals, capitals and fullface. His announcement of a legal holiday on May 7 looks like an editorial clipped from a yellow or yellowish newspaper. In heavy black type that we do not attempt to transcribe it asserts "In Unity There Is Strength." He says:

"The honest people or the special interest will rule."  
 "WHICH SHALL IT BE?"  
 "Shall the creatures of God or the creatures of the Legislature rule the country?"

At the time of the adoption of the Oklahoma Constitution it was believed that in the new State at least the creatures of the Legislature would be under pretty strict control, but

"The past and present war—the General Government must be brought nearer the people."  
 "All pledges of future action are stale with age, and the path of the past is strewn with wrecks of the people's fondest hopes."

"Loud acclamations and fierce denunciations still leave the people with empty hands."  
 Many are satisfied as long as their mouths are full. Not so in Oklahoma:

"THE PEOPLE MUST ACT!"  
 "WHERE'S NOW?"  
 "AMEND THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION."  
 "HOW?"  
 "(A) ELUO UNITED STATES SENATORS BY DIRECT VOTE."  
 "(B) LOCALIZE AN INCOME TAX."  
 "(C) MAKE CONSTITUTIONAL AN EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY LAW."

"The people are all powerful in action, but graft, greed and monopoly rule while the people are silent," asserts the Governor. Graft, greed and monopoly have slim opportunity to rule in these noisy times. But Governor HASKELL "in the interest of Government rendering equal and exact justice to both the rich and the poor" proclaims his legal holiday, that:

"Our people may assemble and confer together. I urge that all advocates of good government—  
 "The Farmers, in their lodge rooms.  
 "The Commercial Clubs in their halls.  
 "The Laborers in their unions.  
 "All Societies for the promotion of Morals and Intelligence.  
 "All who who believe that the Laborer is worthy of his hire, that the home is sacred and domestic happiness should be promoted—  
 "May so assemble and adopt resolutions demanding our Congressmen and Senators support all of these five amendments to the Constitution, and before you rest mail your resolutions to Washington."

"Go after reforms in a practical manner—let promises and no results discredit your sincerity."  
 "Your duty does not lie in prayer that beyond our own small State, weak alone in this fight for good government, that our sister States throughout the Union may add their power."

Visitors to Oklahoma are warned that the adjectives "weak" and "small" as used here are merely rhetorical. Strangers in the State will use them at their own risk. But, says Governor HASKELL: "DO IT NOW! ACTION DEFERRED IS OPPORTUNITY LOST!"

A good, eye captivating proclamation. Governor HASKELL knows how to use type. To silence old fogies who might question the authenticity of a document so unusual in appearance it bears this certificate:

"Attest: BILL CROSS, Secretary of State."  
 No one will doubt the genuineness of BILL's signature, no matter in what typographical form it may appear.

What a sage HENRY WATTSERSON would be to-day in the esteem of all Democrats if during his long and often felicitous career he had devoted half as much time and half as many columns to the impersonal explication of his own position with regard to ideas and events.

Our esteemed contemporary the *Courier des Etats-Unis* announced yesterday the unexpected death of its principal proprietor and editor, Mr. HENRY P. SAMPERS, and said of him: "His unique preoccupation every day and every instant was to make the newspaper indispensable to the French, to make it the organ par excellence of French thought in America." His success has been notable. Probably a deliberate preconception of a journal's special usefulness and limited province has never been pursued more rigidly, more consistently and more ably than in the case of this excellent newspaper published daily in New York in one of the many languages of this metropolis.

We observe that the Southern newspapers of real consequence have taken very languid interest in the banquet of the Cosmopolitan Society at which white and colored persons met around the festal board and explained their various theories of social equality, together with their plans for solving the race question. It was a negligible affair at best, and our contemporaries on the other side of Mason and Dixon's line have done well to view it in that light.

The progress of the Johnson boom in New England is due entirely to a misapprehension as to who Johnson is. Most of the men who have been coming out for him think he is TOM L. JOHNSON. This may sound like a joke, but it actually is a serious fact.—GEOFFREY FARRIS WILLIAMS.

Of course the Bryan men whom the unmistakable WILLIAMS assumes to lead are the only intelligent Democrats in New England.  
 "These fortunate readers who know his college 'skit' 'Holly's Journey to Cambridge' recognize in him a vein of wit in sharp contrast to the dry statistics of 'American Slave Law.'"  
 Is Colonel JOHN TYLER WHEELWRIGHT's notorious claim disputed by Mr. STIMSON? We don't believe it.

## IS THERE TO BE A REVOLUTION IN ETHICS?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—A revolution in theology and in our conception of the government of the universe such as we are undergoing is sure to draw with it a revolutionary movement in ethics. There lies before me a review article giving an account of a number of books on ethics which are widely at variance, it appears, with the ethics of Christianity. The general tendency of the authors seems to be to reject altogether the Christian type of character as artificial and weak, and to aim at substituting for it something more robust and, it is assumed, more in accordance with nature. One theorist is represented as regarding humanity in its present form only as transient material out of which is to be wrought the "Superman." In what respect, so far as our conceptions extend, has Christian ethics failed? It has given birth to the warrior as well as to the martyr, to the virtues of the soldier as well as to those of the stronger sex. Communities which have kept its rules, as well as individuals, have been happy.

The Christian ideal of character and life went essentially unchanged through the violence of the Middle Ages and the voices of the Papacy. It was somewhat perverted by asceticism; but it was the same in Anselm, Thomas à Kempis and St. Louis, as it is in their counterparts now. Nor does it seem to me by denunciation of theological dogma. The moral principles and aspirations of good free thinkers or Positivists remain still essentially Christian.

The ethical ideal which is now being set up against the Christian apparently is that of the Greeks. In literature and art Greece, or rather Athens, or, to speak still more correctly, a limited number of free citizens in Athens, was preeminent; but its pre-eminence, if we may trust its own moralists, hardly extended to morals.

GOLDWIN SMITH.

P. S.—I have read the Pope's letter to the Bishop of Limerick, in which his Holiness denies that Modernism has any hold on Cardinal Newman. I must not venture to contradict infallibility; but does his Holiness recollect that Cardinal Manning accused Cardinal Newman of "minimizing" Catholicism? There can be very little doubt that there was a modification toward the close of Cardinal Newman's life, which I suspect would have extended to the absolute belief once professed by him in the authenticity of Papal miracles. Did Newman toward the latter part of his life take any active part in proselytism? His Holiness, no doubt, can tell.

## VIRTUES OF THE WOODCUT.

Superiority of a Dying Art to Its Cheaper Successor.

From the *New York Medical Journal*.  
 We are glad to learn that the Association of Women Principals of the Public Schools of New York has taken up the question of photographing the children of the poor. The association has for years been convinced of the deleterious effects of the maddening glare given out by the colored paper which is used in books when it is thought desirable to illustrate them with halftone engravings. In some foreign publications we find half tone pictures printed on paper which is almost if not quite unobjectionable so far as glare is concerned. Our French and German neighbors, for example, afford ample evidence of this.

Many of the half tone engravings are in a high degree artistic, and they have the advantage of presenting unobtrusive reproductions of photographic pictures, with all their good points and all their bad ones. For all that, however, we prefer woodcuts for most purposes. Where are the half tones that present such field depictions as are to be found, for instance, in the old woodcuts of Sappho's *Antony*? But the woodcuts must be of a high order of excellence, and to whom shall we turn now for such a work in wood cutting as we were accustomed to a few decades ago? Doubtless a few accomplished engravers still survive, but their numbers must be steadily diminishing. Wood engraving, alas, is almost a lost art. As a rule an engraving on wood is more expensive than a half tone block, and doubtless that fact will tend to the way of a general return to the wood, but it ought not to prevent our taking all practicable steps to safeguard the children's eyes.

## The Melifluous Washington Pie.

To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—At last the Washington pie is coming into its own. I was glad to read the correct version as given by Elizabeth Raymond. The bread crumb and other scrap heap messes as served to the unfortunate city dwellers are a very common sight. To get the true and original article must be sought in its native lair, among the rock ribbed New England hills, where they grow rock ribbed digested to complete with the native culinary art.

Your correspondent, however, has described but one variety of this famous dainty. When I was at school in New Hampshire a variety that most appealed to our lusty appetites had a filling of thick cream custard, which was richly from between the cake layers when bitten by hungry jaws (forks were made for groupings, anyway). Another variety was filled with chocolate.

NEW YORK, May 1. GRANVILLE STARR.

## Absent Minded King Peter.

Rebroke coronation King Peter Galt.

During the late ministerial crisis King Peter ordered Dr. Kalleitich to be summoned to court to tender his advice. When reminded that this statesman was dead his Majesty cheerfully replied: "Of course, of course, I slipped my memory; well, no matter—another time."

## The Next to the Greatest Third Term.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Bela Tokaji commences a letter to THE SUN this morning by misquoting, "These the gods would destroy their first made man."

The rest of his letter would indicate that the gods have got busy.  
 JOHN J. FARRER.  
 NEW YORK, May 1.

## Examined and Admitted.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—We have Cool & Hot, insurance brokers doing business in Denver, Col., at an altitude of 5,200 feet, been passed upon by the committee on admissions of the Hall of Fame?

HOR SPRING, Va., April 30.

## To the New Director of Opera.

Signor Giulio Gatti Casazza.  
 To you New York takes off its hat, sir! We pin our earnest hopes on you, And you'll find plenty here to do.

To make us all feel satisfied,  
 Here are some things you might provide:  
 A chorus that can sing its part;  
 Listeners who do not think it smart  
 Before the end to leave one's seat  
 And drown the notes with snuffing feet;  
 Scene shifters who'll do as they're told;  
 Persons who never have a cold;  
 Fresh air from orchestra to roof;  
 No garlic in the rail bird crowd;  
 Brasses that will not play too loud;  
 New operas given on request—  
 Now, but as good as Verdi's best!

Signor Giulio Gatti Casazza,  
 If only you'll arrange all that, sir,  
 With praise the town will overflow,  
 Most noble impresario!

A May Madrigal.  
 Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?  
 We live in a land that is burdened and bowed  
 With trusts and with tyrannies—according to some;  
 And things are essentially now on the bum!

Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?  
 There's nothing but gloom and opaqueness and cloud  
 'Twixt us and prosperity! Downward we sink,  
 And things are essentially now on the bum!

Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?  
 We're ruled by the rich and the altitude bowed.  
 The plume is a price that the poor man a dog,  
 And things are essentially now on the bum!

Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?  
 I'll tell you, by Jove, if it's allowed;  
 By August the 30th winter will end,  
 And things will essentially be on the bum!

ROBERTSON LYNN.

## THE UNREAD MESSAGES.

From the Boston correspondence of the Springfield Republic.

As the Treasury surplus decreases the surplus of Roosevelt special messages rapidly increases. There must be 1,000 pages of them in the Government Printing Office by this time, and tons upon tons of unread copies, for the man in the street has left off reading this superfluous literature. It no longer interests him, partly because much of it is simple iteration and reiteration of what we had two and three years ago and in prodigious abundance last year, before the panic came and for a brief respite the flow of White House words ceased. It has begun again, and who can say how far it will go? There are messages to burn and that the best use to which they can be put. As a fust maker Mr. Roosevelt surpasses all recent Presidents; but this last spool of message does not even make a fuse; it has fallen dead except at Washington, where it seems to have increased the anger of the Republicans. Congressmen and Senators, who read with truth that such documents help the Democrats and prevent the do-nothing policy of the machine from running smoothly along. It could not even get read in the House, it seems, so lightly have the bosses and speakers carried off the natural activity of the Representatives. But that is no matter, for its influence is little or nothing. It tickles the strange vanity of Bostonians to find they have abuses loud enough to be heard in Washington and get named in a White House bundle of sticks, big and small. But the parallel to this matter elsewhere is that cry of the Mussulman fruit seller in Constantinople: "In the name of the Prophet, figs!"

The President has brought his crop to a poor market this time.

## The Fugitives.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—I have been greatly interested in reading your editorial today on the fugitives of the President's message in the halls of Congress.

Think of grave and dignified Senators and Members standing in their places, with arms folded if need be, listening in silence to a tirade from Mr. Roosevelt!

Pathetic, is it not, April 30.

NEW YORK.

E. T. W.

## Fried Oysters.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—Just because they are ascribable in a few hot words to taste, such as "nausea," your correspondents writing about fried oysters don't prove that they know beans about the subject. "Fried oysters" means, kind of thought I did when I first came to it in a *Sun* dramatic review, eluding to hope when it popped up in a musical review, but lost all hope when I struck it in *the States* and then in art review and got mad all through when I found it in a *country* letter. There are subjects which should be treated respectfully.

But what I'm here to say is that it is all foolishness to talk about comparative merit in fried oysters, because there is no merit whatever in the least evil of them. An oyster is no more designed to be fried than a strawberry to be broiled or a cantaloupe to be roasted. "Angels on horseback," small oysters stewed with alternate portions of fat bacon and lightly broiled, is the nearest oyster will be subjected to the frying process by any one having the slightest knowledge of the art of cooking or a trace of self-respect. Not wishing to appear disrespectful, I only add that the above is not an expression of opinion capable of successful contradiction; it is merely an indisputable fact.

NEW YORK, May 2.

BLISS POINT.

## The Color of Beecher's Hair.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN:—The color of Henry Ward Beecher's hair is of no great importance, but it seems to be of interest, as many persons have spoken to me about it since my casual mention of it in *the States* as "black" and "correspondent corrects me by writing you: 'He was a pronounced blond; that is, his hair was auburn colored.'"

Well, Beecher defines a "blond" as "a person of very fair complexion, with light hair and blue eyes," while "auburn" is specified as "reddish brown." So that tale discards itself.

I knew Beecher from my seventh year, when he came to Brooklyn, until my very early death, and for many years saw him not only Sundays but every day in the week, and my distinct recollection of him is with very dark hair, although not black like the Italian hair. This agrees with the memory of my friends of his when I have asked, and to make sure I wrote to his son, William C. Beecher of Brooklyn, who replies: "To the best of my remembrance, father's hair was dark brown—almost black." I was a child, so my conclusion was not fair, but buddy and his wife were pale blue, although darkening to gray when he was a young man.

JOHN R. HOWARD.  
 MONTCLAIR, N. J., May 1.

## Old Cannon a Clock Weight.

From the *Kennebec Journal*.  
 The most unique clock weight in Maine is that of the Baptist church at Cherryfield, an old smooth bore cannon. The old cannon was one of the old smooth bore type, fired by Captain R. Campbell from Boston on one of the return trips of lumber vessels. It was brought to fire salutes, as the stirring days of the civil war were at hand. After passing many miles in the hands of the Maine militia, it was sold to a private citizen, who, at the surrender of Lee in 1865 it was taken out for a final and grand salute. Robert L. Willey, a soldier of the war, who was at home on furlough, was in charge of the cannon, and through some management a private citizen, Nicholas O'Connor, Mr. Willey high in the air, fired his face with powder and tore one arm off close at the shoulder. The old gun was then applied by the angry citizens and did no more salute service. When the Second Baptist Church building was built in 1875, a weight being wanted for